

SPECIFICATION AMENDMENTS

Replace the entire Summary of the Invention section with:

According to one aspect of the invention, a test sample preparation device may comprise a housing, a filter assembly, a sampler tray, an plurality of vials, and a key mechanism. The housing may have an opening, an interior, and exterior, and a vacuum channel. The vacuum channel provides fluid communication between the interior and exterior of the housing and is capable of coupling a vacuum source to the interior of the housing. The filter assembly is disposed over the opening of the housing and includes a plurality of wells. Each well has two open ends. The filter assembly also includes a plurality of porous media that are respectively disposed in the wells. The sampler tray is removably disposed in the housing, and the plurality of vials are removably disposed in the sampler tray in liquid receiving relationship with the wells, respectively. The key mechanism is coupled to the housing. The housing and the sampler tray have a generally cylindrical configuration, and the key mechanism uniquely defines the circumferential position of the vials in the housing.

According to ~~one~~ another aspect of the invention, a test sample preparation device, which may be used for simultaneously preparing multiple samples directly into vials coupled to a sampler tray, may comprise a housing, a filter assembly, a sampler tray and a plurality of vials. The housing may have an opening, an interior and an exterior, and a vacuum channel. The vacuum channel provides fluid communication between the interior and the exterior of the housing and is capable of coupling a vacuum source to the interior of the housing. The filter assembly is disposed over the opening of the housing and includes a plurality of wells each having two open ends and a plurality of porous media that are disposed in the wells, respectively. The sampler tray is removably disposed in the housing. The plurality of vials are removable coupled to the sampler tray and are in liquid receiving relationship with the wells, respectively. The test sample preparation device may further comprise a key mechanism coupled between the sampler tray and the housing to uniquely define the position of each vial with respect to the housing.

According to another aspect of the invention, a test sample preparation device may comprise a housing, a filter assembly, a sampler tray, an plurality of vials, and a key mechanism. The housing may have an opening, an interior, an exterior, and a vacuum channel. The vacuum channel provides fluid communication between the interior and exterior of the housing and is capable of coupling a vacuum source to the interior of the housing. The filter assembly is disposed over the opening of the housing and includes a plurality of wells. Each well has two open ends. The filter assembly also includes a plurality

of porous media that are respectively disposed in the wells. The sampler tray is removably disposed in the housing, and the plurality of vials are removably disposed in the sampler tray in liquid receiving relationship with the wells, respectively. The key mechanism is coupled to the housing to uniquely define the position of each vial with respect to the housing. The key mechanism includes a post having a first and second ends, an annular protrusion at the second end of the post, and a notch in the annular protrusion.

According to another aspect of the invention, a housing which holds a sampler tray containing vials receiving a liquid sample may comprise a generally cylindrical body that includes open and closed ends and has an interior and an exterior, a vacuum channel that provides fluid communication between the interior of the cylindrical body and the exterior of the cylindrical body, and a key mechanism. The key mechanism includes a post that has first and second ends with the first end being attached to the closed end of the cylindrical body, an annular protrusion disposed at the second end of the post, and a notch disposed within the annular protrusion. The key mechanism is arranged to orient the sampler tray and the vials with respect to the housing.

For some embodiments of the invention, the filter assembly may be used for simultaneously preparing multiple samples directly into vials and may comprise a cover defining an impervious wall with the plurality of wells unitarily formed in the wall. The first and second open ends of each well define a fluid flow path through the wall of the cover via the well between the first end of the well and the second end of the well, wherein each well includes a support and the porous medium is mounted to the support. The support extends across the fluid flow path of the well and contacts the porous medium whereby fluid flowing through the well from the first end of the well to the second end of the well flows through the porous medium and past the support. The first end of the well is upstream of the porous medium and the second end of the well is downstream of the porous medium, wherein the second end of the well comprises a tubular protrusion which, when a vial is placed in liquid receiving relationship with the well, is capable of extending into the vial to minimize cross-contamination.

Some embodiments of the invention may be used in a method for simultaneously preparing multiple test samples for automated liquid chromatography, the method comprising depositing test samples into the plurality of wells, simultaneously passing the test sample through the porous media disposed in the wells, and depositing the filtered test samples directly into the vials removably coupled to the sampler tray.

Some embodiments of the invention may be used in a method for automated liquid chromatography, the method depositing test samples into the plurality of wells, simultaneously passing the test samples through the porous media disposed in the wells,

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depositing the filtered test samples directly into the vials removably coupled to a sampler tray, and directing the filtered test samples contained in the vials removably coupled to the sampler tray through an automated liquid chromatography device.